

Media Release

4 March 2015

Last call for Prime Minister's Awards entries

Education groups, teams and partnerships throughout the country are being called to enter the prestigious 2015 Prime Minister's Education Excellence Awards, which will celebrate outstanding educators in the community.

With just under a month until entries close, interest in the 2015 Awards is growing. Awards Judge and Kensington Swan lawyer, Linda Clark, encourages all schools and early childhood centres to enter.

"There are some incredible schools and early childhood centres in our communities, which make a huge difference in the lives of their pupils. These awards recognise and celebrate that," she says.

Christchurch-based early childhood centre, Nōku Te Ao won the Excellence in Governing Award in 2014 and Kaihautū (Director), Dy Stirling, says the experience has boosted the centre's confidence.

"We are more willing and more likely to lead in areas we know, and less likely to second-guess ourselves or change what we do to suit others - a growth in our own rangatiratanga," says Stirling.

She believes as a result of the award, the community has acknowledged their work too; an experience she has found to be humbling and heart-warming.

"Often we can work day in, day out; not truly acknowledging the difference we make to others' lives with our work. The awards allowed us to have that opportunity," she adds.

As well as the pride and prestige that comes with winning a Prime Minister's Education Excellence Award, winners also receive a prize package. Last year, Nōku Te Ao received a total of \$20,000 in prize money.

The four award categories focus on qualities that are internationally recognised as critical to education – engaging with communities; leading; teaching and learning; and governing. An additional Education Focus prize will also be awarded. This year that prize puts a focus on Learner-led Pathways from early childhood to schooling.

The winning entry from each category will receive \$20,000, as well as a professional development opportunity.

Category winners will also be eligible for the Prime Minister's Supreme Award, which will go to the partnership or group that has had the most impact on raising student achievement. The winner of the Supreme Award will receive an additional \$30,000.

The remaining finalists will be profiled nationally and will also receive a monetary contribution towards their efforts in education.

Entries close on 20 March 2015 and finalists will be announced in May 2015. A national awards ceremony will be held in Wellington in June.

For more information on how to enter, as well as categories and criteria, visit the Prime Minister's Education Excellence Awards website at: pmawards.education.govt.nz.

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Notes to the editor

Award categories, criteria and framework:

Prime Minister's Supreme Award

Takiri ko te ata

This award is selected from the winners in the four Award categories and determined by the extent of improvement and impact on education outcomes.

Excellence in Engaging

Atahāpara Award

This award celebrates working together as a community to transform relationships and achievement, leading to improved and sustainable outcomes for all children and young people.

Excellence in Leading

Atakura Award

This award celebrates leadership and influence that has strengthened professional capability and created a change in conditions, leading to improved and sustainable outcomes for all children and young people.

Excellence in Teaching & Learning

Atatū Award

This award celebrates teaching that transforms the learning of all children and young people, and has improved and sustainable outcomes for them all.

Excellence in Governing

Awatea Award

This award celebrates governance and management that creates the conditions for leading and teaching that improve and sustain outcomes for all children and young people.

2015 Education Focus Prize

Takatū Prize

This prize celebrates a focus on collaboration that creates Learner-led Pathways from early childhood to schooling.

Eligibility criteria

To be eligible for the Awards an entry must:

- focus on improving outcomes for children and young people - in early childhood education, primary school, or secondary school, in English, Māori, or Pasifika-medium
- be from a group, team or partnership (entries about an individual are not eligible)
- be based in New Zealand
- be based around curriculum documents and education strategies developed in New Zealand
- include at least one qualified teacher with provisional or full New Zealand registration
- not pose a risk to the credibility or integrity of the Awards.

Groups, teams or partnerships that include a staff member or contractor from a lead education sector agency are not eligible to enter (including, Ministry of Education, New Zealand Teachers Council, Education Review Office, Education New Zealand, Tertiary Education Commission, New Zealand Qualifications Authority, and Careers New Zealand).